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GENERAL NOTES.

At the meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science held in St. Louis, four papers upon astronomical subjects were presented before Section A, Mathematics and Astronomy. The papers were:—

The Rotation Period of the Planet *Saturn*: G. W. HOUGH, Director of Dearborn Observatory, Evanston, Ill.

Facilities for Astronomical Photography in Southern California: E. L. LARKIN, Director of Lowe Observatory.

The Supporting and Counterweighting of the Principal Axes of Large Telescopes: C. D. PERRINE, Lick Observatory.

A New Type of Transit-Room Shutter: DAVID TODD, Director of Amherst College Observatory.

The fifth meeting of the Astronomical and Astrophysical Society of America was held in St. Louis during Convocation week, in affiliation with the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Professor SIMON NEWCOMB was re-elected President of the Society. The list of papers presented, abstracts of which may be found in *Science* for February 19th, was as follows:—

The Prediction of Occultations of Stars by the Moon: G. W. HOUGH.

The D. O. Mills Expedition: W. W. CAMPBELL.

The Sun's Motion Relative to a Group of Faint Stars: G. C. COMSTOCK.

The Absorption of the Solar Radiation by the Sun's Atmosphere: F. W. VERY.

Borrelly's Comet: SEBASTIAN ALBRECHT.

The Pivots of the Nine-Inch Transit-Circle of the U. S. Naval Observatory: W. S. EICHELBERGER.

A Short Sketch of the Progress of Astronomy in the United States: M. S. BRENNEN.

The *Eros* Parallax Photographs at the Goodsell Observatory: H. C. WILSON.

The following notes have been taken from recent numbers of *Science*.

The grant of the Carnegie Institution to the Department of Astronomy of Princeton University has been increased to \$1,200. This money is to be used in determining the brightness of certain standard stars.

The death is announced of M. CALLANDREAU, member of the Paris Academy of Sciences in the section of Astronomy.

Professor HERMANN STRUVE, Director of the Observatory at Königsburg, has been appointed Director of the Observatory at Berlin.

Sir WILLIAM HUGGINS, President of the Royal Society, celebrated his eightieth birthday on February 7th.

An observatory has been established at Lagreb, the capital of Croatia (Hungary), and is under the direction of Professor OTTO KUCERA. It has equatorials of 6.4 and 4.25 inches aperture, and it is proposed to observe the Sun, planets, and variable stars.

The next meeting of the Astronomical and Astrophysical Society of America will be held, in affiliation with the American Association for the Advancement of Science, at Philadelphia, during Convocation week, 1904-1905.

The *Astronomical Journal* No. 555 contains an important article entitled "Definitive Orbit of Comet 1845 III," by HENRY A. PECK. This was a naked-eye comet and at the time of visibility it was thought that it might be a return of the famous comet observed by TYCHO BRAHE in 1596. Its orbit was computed by D'ARREST, who found that the observations could be equally well satisfied by a parabola, an hyperbola, and an ellipse of 249 years period.

Mr. PECK concludes, however, "that the complete examination of the observations substantiates the parabolic orbit of D'ARREST, while it shows that his ellipse must be abandoned as being contrary to fact."

The Carnegie Institution has granted the sum of \$500 to Professor E. P. LEWIS, of the University of California, for the purpose of carrying on spectroscopic work. Professor LEWIS has already published some interesting results of investigations of the spectra of gases under different physical conditions and upon the spectra of mixed gases. The grant from the Carnegie Institution will enable him to purchase

improved apparatus and to carry on the experiments upon an enlarged scale.

Dr. LUDENDORFF, of Potsdam, has published (*A. N.* 3918-3920) some interesting results of investigations of the brightness of *e Auriga*. The fluctuations in brightness of this star were first discovered in 1821, but the period was not apparent, and it has been classed as an irregular variable. In the fall of 1902 it was found at Potsdam that this star is a spectroscopic binary of probably very long period. Dr. LUDENDORFF finds, from investigation of all the available observations, that this is an *Algol* variable system, composed of two bright stars revolving in a period of 54½ years, and eclipsing each other every 27½ years. The star remains at maximum brightness for over twenty-five years, declines to minimum in 207 days, remains at minimum 313 days, and then returns to maximum in 207 days, to remain again at that brightness for twenty-five years.

Miss CLERKE points out, however, (*The Observatory*, March, 1904,) from the data given, that the mass of the system must be 188,000 times that of the Sun. She thinks, therefore, that Dr. LUDENDORFF's theory, as it stands, is untenable.

His Excellency the United States Ambassador attended the annual meeting of the Royal Astronomical Society yesterday to receive the gold medal which the council have awarded to Professor GEORGE E. HALE, of the Yerkes Observatory. In his presidential address Professor H. H. TURNER recounted the splendid achievements of Professor HALE, chief of which has been his invention of the spectroheliograph, "by which photographs are now made of all the prominences visible round the entire circumference of the Sun, with a single exposure, and by which faculae are clearly shown even in the brightest portion of the Sun's disc." The Sun being the only star we can observe in detail, Professor HALE's method enables the astronomer to get over the difficulty of the excessive brightness of the solar orb and photograph the whole surface. In making the presentation, Dr. TURNER referred to the eminent services which American men of science have rendered to astronomy.

Acknowledging the gift of the medal on behalf of Professor HALE, who was unable to be present, Mr. CHOATE observed that this award was the greatest honor which an astronomer could receive. He was gratified to see how highly the work of American observers was esteemed, and to remember that only three years ago this medal was bestowed on Professor PICKERING, of Harvard. Our astronomers, he added, have rare facilities. Heaven smiles upon them. With three hundred clear days and nights in the year—which I am afraid you cannot have here in London—[laughter]—with splendid observatories provided and equipped with public and private munificence, it would be strange if they did not do well. This gift will add further stimulus to Professor HALE, and to give stimulus and nerve to such a man is to achieve the highest purpose of such an award. [Loud cheers.]—*London Daily Telegraph, Feb. 15th.*